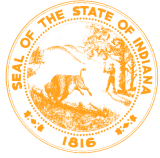


# Russ Stilwell

## Indiana State Representative, District 74



Summer, 2001

Dear Friends:

The 2001 long session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended with the passage of a new state budget and several other important pieces of legislation. I am pleased we completed our work on time in a bipartisan manner.

The new two-year state budget includes increased funding for education, CHOICE and other important programs while avoiding a general tax increase. The budget also includes funding for several important local projects that are detailed inside this newsletter.

We passed several other laws that will benefit our state in a variety of areas, including health care, education, crime, election reform and environmental protection. We made improvements to our license branch operations and passed legislation that will protect consumers from annoying telephone calls with the establishment of a do-not-call list. I have described many of these new laws in the next few pages.

In addition, you will find a map of our new legislative district. We are required to redraw the district boundaries every 10 years due to population shifts. I welcome those of you who are new to the district and look forward to working with you in the coming months to make Indiana a better place to live.

Please contact my office if you have additional concerns or questions about state government. You may e-mail me at [H74@ai.org](mailto:H74@ai.org) or call toll-free at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,

### CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE STILWELL



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### Inside

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# New budget increases school support, local development

Going into the 2001 legislative session, many observers felt that a sluggish economy would make it difficult to enact a biennial state budget without either passing a general tax increase or cutting funding for critical areas like public education. However, the budget bill that became law continues our record of avoiding general tax increases, while providing additional state support to our schools, health care and local projects.

The final version of House Enrolled Act 1001 enables the state to increase support for public schools across Indiana by an average of 3.5 percent each of the next two fiscal years, with minimum guarantees built in to help schools avoid cutting programs and personnel. Funding for higher education was increased by an average of 3.2 percent each year.

## Services and local development

The budget includes additional funding for the CHOICE program that provides in-home care services for the elderly and disabled, as well as Build Indiana Fund support for research and technology, community wastewater and drinking water grants, airport development and improvements to voting systems.

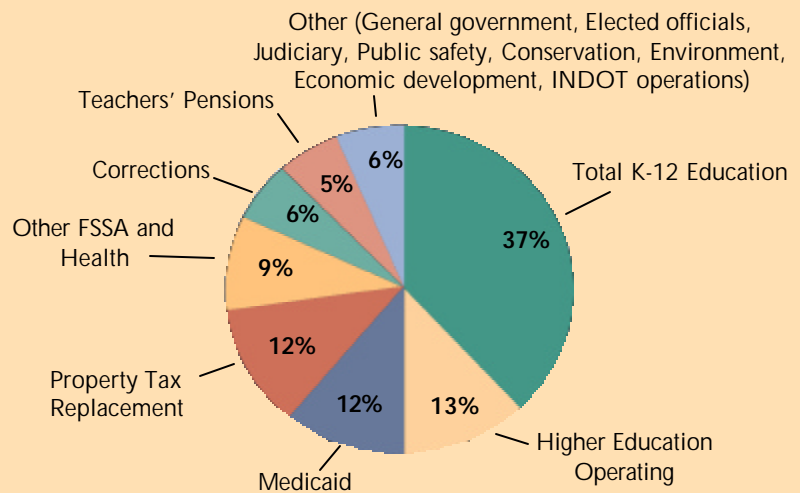
## Tax relief

It was disappointing that we were unable to provide the levels of tax relief that were included in past state budgets, but I am pleased that we were able to extend the life of the homestead credit at 10 percent and maintain the earned income tax credit that assists working families on lower incomes.

Businesses and farms will receive an income tax credit on personal property beginning in 2003, and mobile homes have been changed to be treated as real property with similar deductions. The budget bill continues to fund a statewide property tax relief program that now takes about 16 percent off all property taxes. When coupled with the 10 percent homestead credit, that translates to savings of around 26 percent.

A bill the size of the budget does not contain everything I would like, but considering the fiscal restraints facing legislators going into the 2001 session, I feel this budget is a major accomplishment.

## Spending highlights from the 2001-2003 budget



## Skills 2016 training program focus of Stilwell legislation

Again this session, I authored legislation benefiting working Hoosiers. House Enrolled Act 1962 provides over \$60 million for three-year training programs for incumbent workers. This legislation also changes the administration of unemployment insurance.

The Skills 2016 training program allows Indiana to increase the value of our most valuable asset—Hoosier workers. Workers already on the job will be able to get access to additional instruction to gain new skills, while those people just entering the workforce will be able to take part in improved industrial and building trades programs offered through such locations as Ivy Tech State College and Vincennes University.

Through training, workers will gain upgraded skills and higher earnings opportunities. At the same time, employers will benefit from a more highly skilled work force, which ultimately will improve manufacturing productivity levels and enable firms to become more competitive.

Changes in unemployment insurance will benefit both employers and workers. Employers will have their unemployment insurance taxable wages reduced by 1 percent. Workers will not have their unemployment benefits cut by more than 25 percent during any benefit period. Previous law allowed for a drastic reduction in benefits. Additionally, benefits received before retirement will not be reduced by any retirement benefit received on or after the date the individual elects to retire. This provision allows a worker who draws unemployment insurance benefits and then subsequently retires to receive their retirement from the last date worked without penalty.



## License branch improvements, other changes impact motorists

Patrons and employees of license branches will be pleased with changes enacted by the Legislature this year. Those changes should make the process of going to the license branch more efficient.

House Enrolled Act 1170 contains the following changes:

- Drivers will be able to renew their licenses through the mail and over the Internet.
- Drivers will be able to register their vehicles in any county.
- Vehicle registration deadlines will be staggered to reduce lines. Deadlines will come twice a month.
- The state will have to conduct a public hearing before closing any license branch.

In addition, transaction fees will increase by 50 cents to finance technological improvements.

### Driving under the influence

For more than a decade, lawmakers have tried to make a change in the threshold at which drivers are considered under the influence of alcohol from .10 to .08 percent. In the 2001 session, we were finally able to make this change, which goes into effect on July 1. With this proposal in place, we have another tool in our efforts to keep people who drink and drive off our roads.

While I am pleased that the change is in place, I must note that if Indiana did not make the move to .08, we were at risk of losing federal highway dollars.



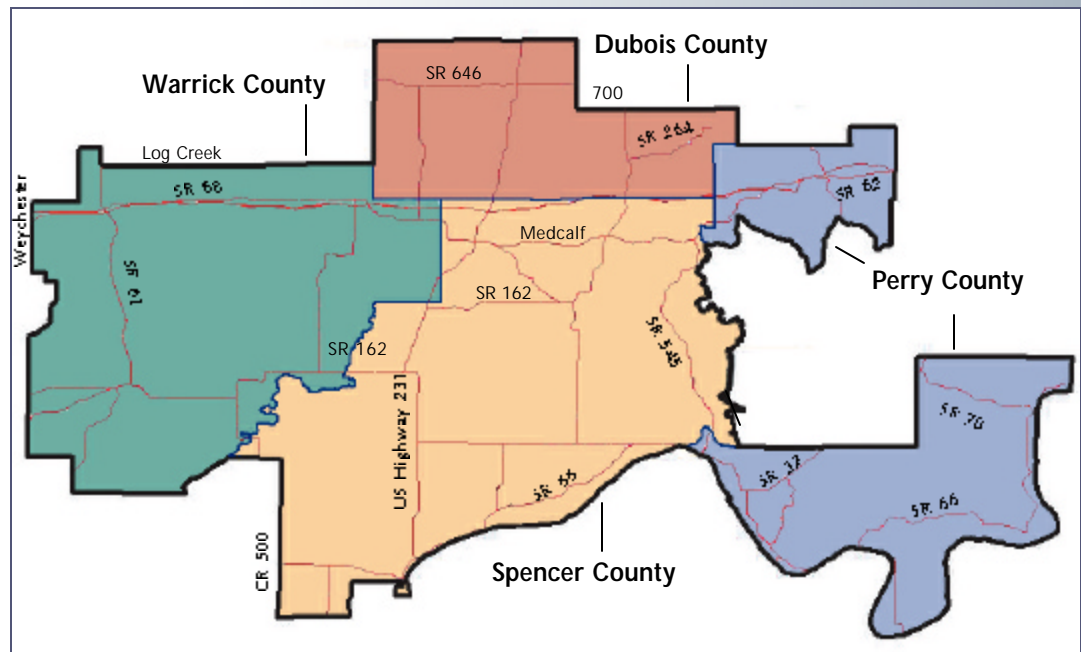
REP. STILWELL DISCUSSES LEGISLATION WITH LT. GOV. JOE KERNAN.

## The new look of District 74

During this year's session you may have heard about redistricting. After each census, the Indiana General Assembly is required by law to redraw House, Senate and Congressional district boundaries according to population changes.

These new district boundaries and redistricting are complicated, as it took months of effort and spirited debate among legislators to find agreement. In the end, however, I feel that the district lines that were drawn are fair and geographically contiguous as possible.

District 74 consists of parts of Warrick, Spencer, Dubois and Perry counties, including the communities of Boonville, Lynnville, Tennyson, Holland,



Huntingburg, Ferdinand, Dale, Santa Claus, Chrisney, Rockport, Tell City, Cannelton, and many other fine communities. District 74 runs from the Ohio River north to Dubois County and runs from Boonville east to Derby in eastern Perry County.

I look forward to serving those of you who are new to our district, and look forward to meeting many new friends and old ones as well as I travel throughout this district. Please contact me if you have any questions about the district or other matters.





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## Privacy from telemarketers and election reform

Stay informed about these  
and other issues online with  
Representative Stilwell



Web: [www.in.gov/R74](http://www.in.gov/R74)

E-mail: [H74@ai.org](mailto:H74@ai.org)

In 2001, lawmakers took steps to help reduce the interruption of telemarketers calling you at home. Through House Enrolled Act 1222, you will be able to have your name placed on a do-not-call list that will **prohibit most solicitors from contacting you via the telephone**. To be placed on the list, contact the Office of the Indiana Attorney General about the **Telephone Privacy List** at 1-888-834-9969.

In the wake of the confusion that took place in the presidential election in Florida last fall, lawmakers in Indiana moved quickly to enact reforms that will change the way we handle elections here.

Senate Enrolled Act 268 gives counties the ability to enter into agreements with the state to purchase **upgraded voting equipment**. This allows counties to take

advantage of the state's ability to purchase large amounts of equipment and materials at discounted prices. Funds contained in the biennial state budget will help the state provide 50 percent matching grants to further reduce those costs. The same legislation also **eliminates the use of punch-card voting** in future elections.

I authored House Enrolled Act 1510, which will help the state move closer to improving voter registration in Indiana. The Indiana Election Division will make a **voter registration form available on the Internet** that people can download, fill out and mail in to be processed. The legislation also strives to update lists of eligible voters by removing names of people who are deceased and convicted felons who are in prison.